The import of 20.57 lakh tonnes of Urea in 2005-06 includes 13.25 lakh MT import of granular urea under long term Urea Off Take Agreement (UOTA) from Oman India Fertilizer Company (OMIFCO), Oman. The imports of MOP also include the quantity utilized for indigenous production of Complex fertilizers.

(c) and (d) Government is continuously pursuing a policy to incentivise indigenous production and improvement of efficiency by conversion from Naphtha to Natural Gas based production of Urea. In P&K sector, due to inherent dependence on imported raw materials, intermediates and finished fertilizers, the government has been encouraging setting up of joint ventures abroad in resource rich countries, in order to secure adequate supplies of P&K fertilizers to India to meet its growing demand.

Outsourcing the construction of tracks of dedicated freight corridor

3151. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways propose to outsource construction of tracks of the dedicated freight corridor projects;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) how far, this would help the Railways to avoid funds crunch?

THE MINSITER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) There is no such proposal at present.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Catering arrangements in Railways

†3152. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL:
SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the catering system/arrangement in the Railways is not proper and well and the quality of the food being supplied is neither of standard quality nor appropriate for the health;

(b) whether despite ail this, the IRCTC has now decided to provide catering facilities at par with the facilities being provided in the aeroplanes;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether potable water will also be provided in each coach of the passenger trains; and

(e) if so, the details therof and by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), a wholly owned company of Indian Railways, has been incorporated on 27.9.1999 to upgrade, run and manage the catering and hospitality services at stations, on trains, and on other establishments of Indian Railways, or at any other locations and prescribe standards, award franchises as a regulatory authority and be a catalyst in stimulating technological upgradation in the handling, presentation, transport, packaging, and service of food and help consolidate and professionalise the catering sector—both departmental and private.

(d) and (e) IRCTC has been mandated to install Water Vending Machines at all categories of stations and on trains. All Mail/Express and Superfast trains would have at last one (1) water vending machine either in pantry car or in any other coach. Water dispensed through such units wilI conform to Bureau of Indian Standards(BIS) specifications set for potable water.

Gauge conversion in Southern Railway

3153. SHRI R. SHUNMUGASUNDARAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the extent of gauge conversion completed in Southern Railway during 2005-06; and

(b) what is the target fixed for the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) 86 Kilometres.

(b) 306 kms of gauge conversion is targeted for completion during 2006-07. Further, 231 Kms. of spill over sections are also planned for completion during 2006-07.